

Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, NATO

SUBJECT: AWACS

1. ON OCTOBER 9, AMBASSADOR BRUCE SENT THE FOLLOWING IDENTICAL LETTERS TO SENATOR MCCLELLAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, AND REPRESENTATIVE MAHON, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS.

2. QTE. DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I WOULD LIKE TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO A SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT WE ARE FACING IN NATO. ONE OF THE NEW SYSTEMS THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO A CREDIBLE NATO DEFENSE IS THE AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS). THIS SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SURVEILLANCE, WARNING AND CONTROL CAPABILITIES TO PERMIT US

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TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS IN AIR DEFENSE AND IN

CONCENTRATING NATO AIR RESOURCES AGAINST ANY THREATENED ATTACK.

THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL HAS INITIATED SEVERAL STUDY EFFORTS TOWARD PROVIDING A NATO AWACS, AND A CONTRACT DEFINITION EFFORT IS NOW UNDERWAY FUNDED BY SEVERAL OF THE NATO NATIONS. WE EXPECT AN ALLIED EXPRESSION OF COMMITMENT

THIS DECEMBER AND PROCUREMENT DECISIONS NEXT YEAR. IF THIS COMES ABOUT IT WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND AMBITIOUS WEAPON SYSTEM EVER UNDERTAKEN BY NATO.

I UNDERSTAND THERE IS CURRENT CONSIDERATION OF REDUCING THE FY 1976 US AWACS PROGRAM FROM SIX TO AS FEW AS TWO AIRCRAFT. SHOULD THIS OCCUR, THERE WOULD BE A CORRESPONDING MAJOR ESCALATION IN COST ESTIMATES FURNISHED FOR THE PROSPECTIVE NATO PROGRAM. AT THE LEAST, THIS WOULD BREAK THE CURRENT MOMENTUM AND CALL FOR A TOTAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE APPROACH.

IT IS FOR THESE REASONS THAT I VENTURE TO POINT OUT THE IMPORTANCE TO THIS NATO DECISION PROCESS OF A STABLE US AWACS PROGRAM DURING THE NEXT EIGHT MONTHS. I FULLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT IN APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR US MILITARY PROCUREMENTS, CONGRESSIONAL JUDGMENTS CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE DETERMINED SOLELY BY THE IMPACTS WHICH THESE MAY HAVE ON ALLIANCE ACTIVITIES. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE YOU WOULD WISH TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THESE PROBABLE EFFECTS AS YOU WEIGH YOUR DECISION. SINCERELY, UNQTE.

KISSINGER

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